LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.
PE 635
Chap. ..... Copyright No. .....
Shelf. Z9 B38
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Mr. Schuyler's ~ ~ Fiancees

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

By Caroline M. Beaumont

ST. PAUL, MINN.

1895

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS COPYRIGHT OCT 24 1895 WASHINGTON.

MR. SCHUYLER'S FIANCÉES

A Comedy in Three Acts

BY

CAROLINE M. BEAUMONT

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
COPYRIGHT
OCT 24 1895
CITY OF WASHINGTON.

ST. PAUL, MINN:
THE MCGILL PRINTING CO.,
1895.

PS 635
.Z9 B38

Copyright 1895
By Caroline M. Beaumont.
All Rights Reserved.

Mr. Schuyler's Fiancées

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

. . . BY . . .

Caroline M. Beaumont

CHARACTERS

MRS. LESLIE . . . . . A widow, fair, forty and flirtatious

MISS CONSTANCE LANGDON . One of the Boston four hundred

MISS JANE PEARCE . . . . .
Her aunt, a spinster with memories of youthful days

MISS LOTTIE LAMB . . . A model, and a member of Bohemia

MR. HENRY SCHUYLER . . . . . A widower

MR. JOHN SCHUYLER . . . .
His son, an artist, and the hero of the piece

MR. RICHARD SHERWOOD . . . . . Also an artist

JAMES GRANT . . . . A man-servant with a good memory

ACT I.

The Scene is laid in the studio of Mr. Richard Sherwood and Mr. John Schuyler in New York city. The room is full of pictures, hangings, easy chairs, curios; table in the centre, side-table on which stands a decanter and glasses; an easel on either side, upon one of which is an unfinished canvas. There is a door at the back, another at the left, at the right is a door-way in which a heavy curtain is hung. When the curtain goes up Mr. Richard Sherwood is discovered, standing in front of the unfinished picture with his hands in his pockets. Lotty comes in with her hat on, parasol in her hand, and drawing on a pair of gloves.

Lotty. Well, we've had a very jolly afternoon, and I suppose I must be going; when do you expect Ja—, Mr. Schuyler?

Dick. Very soon, in fact I should not be at all surprised if he turned up to-night.

Lotty. Yes, he's due to-night, for I'm to sit for him to-morrow as ——

Dick. Yes, as what, an angel?

Lotty. No, a saint; this way, (she crosses her hands and throws her eyes up) seraphic expression about the mouth, so! Eyes full of ——

Dick. Of the devil, I suppose.

Lotty. (Smiling) No, of tears; unshed tears, you know; mouth——

Dick. Full of beer?

Lotty. (Laughing and going toward door.) Oh, you are a nice one, you are, beer for a saint! Well, I'm off; when shall I see you again?

Dick. (Walking about.) Can't say, I'm sure, I'm thinking of going away myself, when Jack gets back.

Lotty. (Near the door back.) Very well, good by, I'll drop in later to see if Mr. Schuyler wants me to-morrow. (She is at the door.)

Dick. (Sits down and lights his pipe.) Good bye.

Lotty. Ta-ta! (Exit Lotty.)

Dick. If anybody had told me I would be as bored having a good time as I was to-day, I wouldn't have believed it, (noise is heard) there's some one, I hope that young woman hasn't forgotten something and is returning; (door at back opens and Jack comes in; deposits his, hat, umbrella and bag upon the table.)

Dick. (Rising.) Halloa!

Jack. How are you?

Dick. I'm downright glad to see you back, old man.

Jack. What's been on here? I saw Miss Lotty Lamb disappearing round the corner.

Dick. Oh, I had a little tea,—for Bohemia you know.

Jack. Same crowd, I suppose?

Dick. Yes, the very same. Well are you glad to get back?

Jack. No, not in the least.

Dick. (Smiling.) Oh, don't mind me, say anything you please. What's the matter, what do you mean?

Jack. (Drawing off his gloves.) I mean that I'm through with that Lotty and Dotty crowd, that's what I mean.

Dick. Oh ho, through with me too, I suppose that means

Jack. I beg your pardon, old man, I don't mean that I'm through with you at all; but if you were in the hole, the fix that I'm in, you'd feel as I do. Well I'll tell you all about it.

Dick. That's right, that's right; I knew there was something up the minute I laid my eyes on you; father been cutting up rough?

Jack. No, no, that is not yet, but he will of course. Oh, I'm in the devil of a hole, I am! (He walks to the side table, and pours a drink; Dick does the same; both standing with glass in hand.) You know when I left here, I only expected to see the family, my aunt and sister,—Polly you know,—up at Newburgh, but when I got there, I found Polly had a house-party, friends from Boston; well, Dick, one of those girls, oh well, what's the use of talking about it? (Puts down glass and walks up and down.)

Dick. My dear fellow, you needn't say another word, I see it all, pretty girl, moon, spoon, and—

Jack. (Angrily.) Shut up, you ass, and let me tell you; I've got to tell somebody or burst.

Dick. Well, don't burst here; just go on, and out with it. (He puts his glass down.)

Jack. (Stopping in front of him.) Well, you ought to see that girl; what a fool I am; I'm in love with her, that's the long and short of it, and how in—blazes I'm going to get her beats me. (He walks across the room, and throws his eyes up in rapture.) Constance! Constance, that's her name, pretty, isn't it?

Dick. Yes, quite so, but I wish you'd get on with your story and leave out the hysterics till afterwards.

Jack. All right, old man, all right, but you see——

Dick. How in the devil can I see, till you tell me? Go on. What's the hitch, doesn't she smile?

Jack. (Goes to table in center, takes a pipe and lights it.) I haven't asked her yet; I stayed there until she left for Boston, then I came here to tell you that I'm going to drop that crowd, that we've, well—that we've been entertaining lately, and I'm going to settle down.

Dick. (Also taking pipe and lighting it.) Going to settle up, too?

Jack. Yes sir, I'm going to do that too; I have a picture in my mind that I'm going to begin transferring to canvas to-morrow; but if you

want that Lotty and Dotty crowd here; I'll have to move out. (He sits.)

Dick. My dear boy, I don't want them; they bored me to death to-day; the truth is its hard to shake off people of that kind.

Jack. Yes, that's it; there's nothing wrong about them, but ye gods! after the company I've been in! Constance!

Dick. Now, I say, won't you quit that; you really make me nervous, I'll get out if——

Jack. (Smiling.) I won't do it any more, I swear I won't, but you see, Dick, a man in my state is hardly responsible.

Dick. (Sitting down.) My dear fellow, I haven't the slightest sentiment about lunatics; if you're off your head, I'll clap a straight-jacket on you and be done with it. Now see if you can tell me what you've started to.

Jack. I will, old man, I will. I'm invited to her aunt's country place in August——

Dick. Well, then, what in the devil are you making such a mouth about? I don't see that you're in any fix but a pleasant one.

Jack. (Sighing.) That's because you don't know anything about it; my father said he would never give me a cent to marry on, and you know how much I've painted and how much I've saved the last year or two.

Dick. Fathers' always talk like that; I should think yours would put up a good sum to see you well married.

Jack. Well, that's not the worst of it by half; she's got money and how can a poor painter ask a rich girl to marry him, (rising) but by Jove she'll marry me or——

Dick. Now there you go again, and you said you wouldn't. I think you're a very lucky dog, myself.

Jack. (Laughs bitterly.) Do you? Well, I think I'm the biggest fool unhung; you see, old chap, there's another obstacle.

Dick. Is there? Well, out with it, only try and stick to your story.

Jack. I will, I'll tell you all about it, and you say just what you think. (He sits down again; Dick rises and refills his pipe.)

Dick. Fire away, I'm listening.

Jack. Well, sir, when I was twenty-one (and by the way, a fellow at that age ought to have a nurse) I went up to Lake George for a couple of months in the summer; I was just graduated, and thought I knew it all. Well, there was a gay crowd there, and among them a widow, a Mrs. Leslie——

Dick. Good-bye to little Jacky!

Jack. Well, sir, I tell you she was a regular stunner, about thirty-five, looked twenty-five,

fascinating and very good fun. I verily believe that woman would have made eyes at a wooden man! Well, you see I thought I was regularly done for! I vowed eternal constancy and she smiled; the upshot of it was that I told her I'd jump in the lake if she wouldn't have me, so to save my life, she said she'd consent to an engagement.

Dick. (Smiling.) Very kind of her!

Jack. Yes, damned kind; but one night I found her with another fellow holding her hand, and I cut up rough; she said she must be allowed to go her own way, that she liked me best, etc., you can imagine the rest.

Dick. I think I can; you grovelled and she continued to flirt.

Jack. Just so; then one day I happened to mention that I had a letter from my father, and she remarked it was about time I wrote him and told him of my engagement; somehow it grated, and that night I got to thinking what an almighty fool I was, and I hate a scene so, that I just got up early the next morning and vanished!

Dick. (Goes into fits of laughter.) Well,—of all —the—asses—I ever—

Jack. (Never smiles.) I fail to see anything funny about it. Yes, sir, I bolted. She was from Boston.

Dick. (Still laughing.) The devil she was! But you were such a young chap then.

Jack. (Rising.) I was a young fool then. (Excitedly.) I tell you, Sherwood, if I ever saw that old woman again, I'd cut and run for it, I believe I would.

Dick. I advise you to; but what has that to do with the present affair?

Jack. Well, you see, since I've met—Miss Langdon—I've realized what a shabby thing I did, and for all I know that confounded woman may consider herself still engaged to me, although I've never even heard of her since. But don't you see what a er—blamed fix I'm in?

Dick: Couldn't you hunt her up and state the case?

Jack. (Groaning.) Yes, but don't you see, suppose I could, and suppose I found she,—well, wanted to go on with the affair; my last state would be worse than my first.

Dick. Well, upon my word you must consider yourself quite irresistible. She's probably been engaged a dozen times since then. (Sounds are heard.)

Jack. (Rising.) Sh, Sh, that's probably my father.

Dick. (Rising.) Does he know anything about that affair?

Jack. Not he; and not a word before him, either; I may be an ass but I'm not a chump.

Dick. Well, you're the best immitation I ever saw. By the way, Lotty will be here presently to know if you want her. (Door at back opens and Mr. Schuyler appears.)

Jack. The devil she will! How are you father?

Mr. S. So, you've come back; (coming down.) How are you, Sherwood? I'm going to run up to Newburgh to-night, so I thought I'd stop in and see what you're going to do.

Dick. (Preparing to go.) Well, I'll toddle along, and leave you two to have a talk. (Takes hat and starts.)

Jack. (Aside to Dick.) Confound you, why don't you stay!

Dick. (Going.) Good night, Mr. Schuyler. (Aside to Jack.) Ta-ta, old chap, look sharp! (Exit Dick.)

Mr. S. Nice chap, that Sherwood, nice chap, (standing before easel) I see he's been painting.

Jack. Yes, and now that I've had my little holiday, I'm going to work in earnest.

Mr. S. Glad to hear it, my boy, glad to hear it; you've spent a good many dollars for nonsense in your time, and it won't hurt you to settle down, (chuckles and pokes him in the side). Who is she?

Jack. (Very serious.) She! How can I think of marriage in my condition?

Mr. S. (Walking up and down.) That's so, how can you, and you'd better not, if you mar-

ried I'd gain a daughter, instead of losing a son. (He laughs.)

Jack. It will not always be so, sir!

Mr. S I hope not, I hope not; I'd like to see you married to a nice sweet girl, when you can support her, that is; the first year I was married, your mother and I lived on half you've spent in—amusing yourself; its all a mistake, all a mistake; but you ought not to think of marriage for years yet; you're not thinking of it, are you, sir?

Jack. (Sighing.) No, I'm not thinking of it. But won't you sit down?

Mr. S. (Coming down.) By the way, have you got that old miniature of your mother? If you have I wish you'd give it to me, I'm going to have it enlarged for Polly's birthday.

Jack. Yes, sir, its in the bottom of my trunk; just sit down and I'll get it for you.

Mr. S. (Sits at right of table.) Very well, only be quick; I'm going up on the nine o'clock train.

Jack. (Goes toward door at left, then stops.) Oh, I say, father.

Mr. S. Well.

Jack. You see, sir, before I went away, I engaged a model for to-morrow, a young woman named Lotty.

Mr. S. Yes, yes, well what about her?

Jack. Well, er—I have decided to paint from memory—a face I've seen, so if that young woman

should happen to come in while I'm in my room—I wish you'd just say to her that—

Mr. S. (Impatiently) Well, say what to her? I wish you'd—

Jack. Say to her that the engagement is off for to-morrow; I don't want to see her, you know and—

Mr. S. So, that's it, is it? Oh, I'll tell her for you, in a way she'll understand, I'll tell her moreover, that's its off for ever; you can paint without models.

Jack. (Going.) Say what you please, only send her off. (Exit Jack.)

Mr. S. This model business is all nonsense, I don't approve of it at all. (Walks up and down.) Oh yes, I'll fix her, (stops in centre.) But that boy's just like his dad, regular dog, regular dog! He'll settle down as I did when he meets a girl like his mother, bless her heart! How I do miss her. (Woman's voice is heard outside.)

Mr. S. Who's that? (Listens.)

Mrs. L. (Outside.) Mr. Schuyler? Yes, he's the one I want to see. Announce me? No, I prefer to announce myself. (Enters.) How do you do? Mr. Schuyler, is he here?

Mr. S. (Bowing.) At your service, madam.

Mrs. L. (Smiling.) Oh no, I'm sure there is a mistake, the Mr. Schuyler I want to see is, well,

(with a coquettish glance) just a few years younger than you. Know him?

Mr. S. Ah, my son; (aside) Lotty! The boy's a fool, she's magnificent!

Mrs. L. Is it possible? It is hard for me to believe that you have a son as old as—Jack. (Mr. S. Throws his shoulders back and smiles.)

Mr. S. Yes, I believe I am considered rather young looking. But you spoke of—Jack.

Mrs. L. Yes, I said Jack.

Mr. S. Well he's younger than he looks, than he appears.

Mrs. L. (Smiling.) Impossible!

Mr. S. Eh, what?

Mrs. L. Oh nothing, I thought him quite young enough, but old for a son of yours. (Starts.) By the way, where is he?

Mr. S. Yes, well, he's busy.

Mrs. L. Well, I want to see him. Just say an old—friend—would like to see him.

Mr. S. Oh no, he told me to excuse him.

Mrs. L. (Smiling.) But you see he wasn't expecting me.

Mr. S. Oh yes, he was. (He smiles.)

Mrs. L. Was he? That's strange.

Mr. S. Not at all, he left a message for you.

Mrs. L. (Dropping into a chair.) What?

Mr. S. He told me, madam, what I can scarcely credit since I've laid my eyes upon you, that he didn't want to see you. (Standing in front of her.) Could I make myself plainer?

Mrs. L. (Smiling and running her eye over him.) Not possibly! (He smiles.)

Mr. S. Do you want my opinion of him, madam? (close to her) I think he's a fool, madam, a fool!

Mrs. L. You are quite right; he is; he's not at all like—you!

Mr. S. Ah, I told him he could leave it to me.

Mrs. L. Leave what to you?

Mr. S. You, madam! (With a bow.)

Mrs. L. My dear old gentleman, (he frowns) there is certainly a mistake, your son was not expecting me to-day.

Mr. S. Isn't your name Lotty?

Mrs. L. (Astonished.) Lotty? My name is Charlotte Leslie.

Mr. S. (Smiling.) I thought so! Well, Jack calls you Lotty for short.

Mrs. L. Oh he does, does he? Strange I shouldn't know it, isn't it?

Mr. S. Extremely strange, my dear madam, extremely strange. (Goes close to her.) Now if I called you—Lotty, you'd know it.

Mrs. L. (Smiling.) Indeed I would know it. But you see—

Mr. S. Yes, I see, what?

Mrs. L. You'll never call me—Lotty. (Laughs.) Come now, there's a dear man, go and tell Jack I want to see him; I have something to tell him that I know he'll be glad to hear.

Mr. S. Oh no, I will give you his message.

Mrs. L. Oh now, I know you've made a mistake, he couldn't have left a message for me.

Mr. S. Do you mean to impugn my veracity, madam? He said—

Mrs. L. Yes, that's so, what did he say?

Mr. S. He said: "Father, if Lotty comes—"

Mrs. L. (Interrupting.) Yes, he said: "Father, if Lotty comes—" go on.

Mr. S. I was endeavoring to go on when you interrupted me, he said—

Mrs. L. Well, I won't interrupt you any more, go on.

Mr. S. I trust not, its not pleasant to be—

Mrs. L. (Stamping her foot.) Go on!

Mr. S. I am going on if you will allow me; he said "tell Lotty that it is—"

Mrs. L. It is! What is?

Mr. S. That is just what I am trying to tell you—

Mrs. L. Well, go on!

Mr. S. "Tell Lotty that the engagement is off for"—

Mrs. L. Oh, he said that, did he? He said that.

Mr. S. Yes, its all off.

Mrs. L. (Smiling.) You're sure its off?

Mr. S. Yes its off, for ever. My son has stopped fooling and settled down.

Mrs. L. Has he? Now you don't say? Well, I'll settle down with him!

Mr. S. Eh, what?

Mrs. L. Nothing, nothing, but you know I came to say—

Mr. S. Yes, what did you come for?

Mrs. L. I came here to say that its all off, too, but on second thought I believe that you can tell him for me that its all on, you see I sometimes change my mind.

Mr. S. You could do more, madam, you could change mine.

Mrs. L. Could I? Too bad that Jack is not more like you. I somehow think it would be easier.

Mr. S. Eh, what would be easier?

Mrs. L. (Smiling.) Oh, everything, you know.

Mr. S. No, I don't know, I wish I did. (She goes close to him.)

Mrs. L. How very black your hair is!

Mr. S. (Smiling.) Do you think so? I don't look like an old man, do I? (Aside.) She's a damned fine woman, that's what she is.

Mrs. L. No, but you look like a very—

Mr. S. Very what now?

Mrs. L. Very nice man! (Lotty appears at back.)

Lotty. Oh ho, what's this? I thought Mr. Schuyler had come. But this is—company.

Mr. S. (Bows.) To whom have I the pleasure of speaking?

Mrs. L Yes, who is this young person?

Lotty. (With a glance at both and imitation of their manner.) And who are these old people?

Mrs. L. Good, little girl!

Mr. S. What did you say your name was?

Lotty. I did not say; come, old man, where's Jack?

Mr. S. Well, upon my word, do you mean Mr. John Schuyler?

Lotty. Perhaps I do; just tell him I want to see him.

Mr. S. What name shall I say?

Lotty. Say Lotty and he'll understand.

Mr. S. (Looking from one to the other bewildered.) Lotty! Great Heavens, what does this mean?

Mrs. L. Oh ho, so there was a Lotty! My good child, don't you think you've made a mistake?

Lottie. No, my good woman, I don't think I have. Mr. Schuyler is a—friend of mine.

Mr. S. (Turning to Mrs. L.) And may I ask, madam, who you are?

Mrs. L. (Smiling.) Certainly you may ask.

Mr. S. Well?

Mrs. L. Well.

Mr. S. Will you tell me who you are, my dear madam?

Mrs. L. (Smiling.) Certainly, I am Mr. Jack Schuyler's fiancée! (Lotty and Mr. S. much astonished.) You'd better ask him to come out and see me.

Lotty. (To Mr. S.) Oh, bah! Don't believe her; Jack knows better than to marry his grandmother!

Mr. S. There is some terrible mistake! I have never heard Jack speak of you, madam.

Mrs. L. Now you must admit that is not my fault—father! (She laughs and he groans.) I told Jack it would be wise to tell you. Come go and tell him that Lotty and—a friend, want to see him.

Mr. S. (Going toward door.) Yes, he shall come in here and untangle this affair. (At the door at left.) Jack!

Mrs. L. Lest the suddenness of my appearance might upset the dear boy, I will just stand behind this curtain. (She gets behind the curtain at right; head out.)

Jack. (Appears at door left; sees Lotty.) What is it? Excuse me sir, I haven't found the picture yet. (Disappears.)

Mr. S. (Angrily.) Confound the boy! To leave me with two women on my hands. Jack, I say!

Mrs. L. (Head out from the curtain.) Dear Jack! If he only knew I was here! (Dick comes in at back.)

Dick. Oh here you are, Lotty. You haven't gone, Mr. Schuyler. Where's Jack?

Mrs. L. (Putting her head out.) That's just it, we're waiting for—dear Jack!

Dick. (Much astonished.) Who is that lady? And what is she doing in there?

Mr. S. I don't know who she is, but I think she is, (touches his head.)

Mrs. L. I'll tell you why I am here, Mr.——

Dick. (Bowing.) Sherwood.

Mrs. L. Sherwood, oh yes, very happy to meet you, Mr. Sherwood, you see I'm-er-engaged to Jack, and I came in here for fear the sudden sight of me would upset him.

Lotty. He's changed if it would.

Dick. (Laughing.) Oh I see. (Aside.) The widow's turned up, by Jove! Now he's in for it! (To her.) Won't you have a seat, Mrs. Leslie.

Mrs. L. (Coming out.) How did you know me, Mr. Sherwood? I suppose you've heard Jack speak of me.

Dick. Yes, he was speaking of you only to-day.

Mr. S. Well, well, upon my word, I like this, my only son engaged, and I not know it.

Lotty. There's a mystery here and I'll just stay and see it out.

Dick. Well, you see—

Mr. S. No, sir, I don't see, I don't see, I——

Mrs. L. (To Dick.) Oh Mr. Sherwood, how much you look like an old beau of mine.

Lotty. Well, how many more does she want?

Dick. (Becoming nervous.) No, no, you've made a mistake, lovely day isn't it? So bright I think it will—rain. (Aside.) Not me!

Mr. S. (At the door at left.) Here he comes, now I'll have an explanation of this affair.

Mrs. L. (Going behind curtain again.) Oh he's coming; now I'll surprise him, don't you think he'll be surprised to see me, Mr. Sherwood?

Dick. (Smiling.) Just a little!

Lotty. She's a queer party, she is.

Mr. S. (Leading Jack in.) Now sir, I want to know what this means, sir, here are two—(Mrs. L. puts out her hand and pulls his coat tail, Jack's back is toward her.) Oh!

Jack. (Seeing Lotty.) Oh, the devil! Dick—

Dick. I wash my hands of this affair. You're in for it.

Jack. I don't see why. Now father, what's the row about?

Mr. S. Oh, you're very innocent, you are—

Lotty. (Interrupting.) Your fiancée is here, Mr. Schuyler.

Jack. (Astonished.) My what is here?

Mr. S. The lady you're engaged to sir, and I'd like to know sir,—

Lotty. And she's an elderly person.

Mrs. L. (Putting her head out and speaking to Dick; Jack does not see her.) An elderly person! Now, Mr. Sherwood, I'm sure you wouldn't call me that?

Dick. (Smiling.) Never!

Jack. An elderly person, what are you talking about?

Mr. S. To think my only son should so deceive me. Do you deny you are engaged to this lady?

Jack. What lady? Of course I deny it, I don't even know what you are talking about.

Lotty. Well, Mr. Jack Schuyler, you are the—

Jack. Come now, what is the matter? I'm not engaged to anybody, that is not yet!

Mrs. L. (Throwing curtain aside.) Jack! Don't you remember me?

Jack. (Aghast.) My god! The widow! (He falls into a chair.)

Lotty. So he does know her.

Dick. (To Jack.) Get up, I'll stand by you.

Mr. S. Oh my son, I thought you were a truthful boy!

Jack. Oh sir, its all a mistake, I can explain—

Mrs. L. (To Dick.) Dear Jack! He was thoroughly overcome when he saw me!

Dick. Utterly so!

Mr. S. What have you to say for yourself, sir?

Mrs. L. No, I'll explain, (going to Mr. S.) Now don't be hard on Jack; you see it was this way. When your son was some years younger we met, and we loved, didn't we Jack? (he groans) or we met, and he loved, I've always loved—someb dy. And well, something happened and we separated; so I came here to day to tell Jack that it was all over, but the sight of his—surroundings you know, fascinated me, old times came back, and remembering how he loved me, eh Jack? (he groans) I changed my mind and decided to make him happy, that's all there is to it, I assure you.

Jack. That's quite enough. Yes, father, Mrs. Leslie and I are old friends, but, (speaking to Mrs. L.) you see, here's Lotty.

Mrs. L. Well, what's she got to do with it?

Jack. (To Lotty.) You'll never give me up, will you, Lotty? (Aside.) Say you'll never give me up, and I'll explain afterwards. (Loud.) We're going to be married, aren't we Lotty, and have a nice little home right in the middle of the lake, aren't we, Lotty?

Lotty. (Understanding.) Yes, ma'am, I'll never give him up, he's my first and only love, aren't you Jack?

Mrs. L. (Smiling.) Why, Jack, don't you remember what you said to me that night, you said—

Jack. Never mind what I said.

Dick. (Smiling.) Yes, what did he say?

Mr. S. Made a fool of himself, I'll be bound, he seems to have a genius that way.

Mrs. L. Why don't you remember you said: my darling, I would give up everything for you, (she imitates his tones) home, family, (he groans) everything that I hold dear; I would climb the highest mountains, swim the deepest rivers—

Jack. Oh come now, I say; remember Lotty.

Lotty. Yes, remember me; Jacks little me!

Dick. Go on, Mrs. Leslie, that was lovely.

Mrs. L. (Handkerchief to her eyes, but smiling.) Its the memory of those happy days that has come to me since I've been here. Yes, Jack, you said—

Mr. S. (Furious.) Never mind what he said, madam. He was an ass, that's what he was. I'm disgusted with you, sir, and I wash my hands of you sir, you can paddle your own canoe; engaged to two women at once, it's outrageous sir!

Jack. Oh you don't understand, there's only Lotty, isn't there, Lotty? (puts his arm about her).

Lotty. Yes, there's only me, and what more do you want,—dear Jack!

Mrs. L. (Goes and puts his other arm about herself.) Don't forget me, dear Jack!

Lotty. (Looking round back of Jack.) Go away, you horrid bold woman!

Mrs. L. (Looking round in front of Jack.) Don't be cross, there's a good little girl; you can be his—second wife!

Jack. Dick, I say—

Dick. (Going.) Sorry, old man, but I must be going. Ta-ta, you're well fixed.

Mr. S. Well, I'm off; you're a rascal, sir; I'll not forget this. (He goes toward the door).

Mrs. L. (Laughing.) Good by—father!

Lotty. Ta-ta—papa!

Jack. Really you know, I must be going, come Lotty! (He tries to get away, they chase him round the room, and catching him, the curtain falls with one of the women on either side, and the two men laughing in the back ground).

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

The scene is laid at the country house of Miss Jane Pearce, at Beverly, Mass., and three months is supposed to have elapsed. The curtain goes up upon the hall or living room of the house. In the background is the entrance, two glass doors through which are seen the pillars of a piazza, and green fields in the distance. There is a door at the right, another at the left; the room is furnished with comfortable chairs, a lounge at the left; a fire-place at the right; matting and rugs upon the floor; a tea-table in one corner, upon which is a tea service; a library table in the centre upon which are books, ink-stand, papers, a fan, etc. When the curtain goes up, James, the man-servant, is discovered dusting and putting things to rights.

James. That Miss Pearce is the queerest, nicest, little old lady I ever saw, and the work's easy, and Lotty is a nice girl; yes, I think I will stay, as long as Lotty is here, any way. It was Miss Pearce herself who said to me only this morning, "no more quiet now, James, no more quiet, Miss Langdon is going to fill the house with her gay friends," but says she, "whatever you do, James, you must not forget to give Tabby her milk," she is so fond of that cat. (Jack is seen coming up the steps with a bag in his hand.) Here's somebody now! (James opens the glass door.) Come in, sir.

Jack. Yes, thank you, just take my bag, (gives it to him) and present my card to Miss Langdon and her aunt, Miss Pearce. (Gives him card.)

James. (Takes it.) Yes, sir, have a seat, sir, and I'll go, sir. (Exit James.)

Jack. (Alone.) Here I am at last, after that terrible experience with those two women in June, here I am away from them both, with my picture finished and sold, by Jove! (He walks up and down.) Constance! (Eyes thrown up in rapture.) But it is a mysterious thing what has become of that widow, its too much good luck to think I have never laid eyes on her since that day, and Lotty too has vanished as completely; and here I am among strangers, who know nothing of my worries, yes, worries, that is the word, and I can begin life again, (James enters but he does not see him, his head is in the air) and free to win that angel! (He nearly falls over James.) Oh, yes, beg pardon.

James. Miss Langdon will be down in a few minutes, sir.

Jack. Oh yes, very well. (James lingers.) Well?

James. (Smiling.) I don't believe you remember me, sir!

Jack. (Putting up single glass.) Can't say I do; never had the pleasure of your acquaintance.

James. Why, I used to wait on you up at Lake George, five or six years ago.

Jack. (Groaning.) The devil you did!

James. Yes, sir, on you and the—er—the lady.

Jack. Oh, yes, on me and the—er the lady.

James. How is she, sir?

Jack. (Thinking a moment.) The lady? Oh, she's dead, died very suddenly.

James. Oh, now, sir, you don't mean to say that nice, kind lady is dead? Now that is too bad; such a kind lady.

Jack. Yes, she was very—er—kind; kind in her to die, you know. (He laughs wildly, and goes close to James.) What is your name, my good fellow?

James. James, sir.

Jack. (Hand in his pocket.) Well, James, (gives him something) I want you to make it a point to forget—Lake George.

James. Smiling and putting something in his pocket.) Nothing easier, sir, I have forgotten—Lake George.

Jack. That's right, that's right; now James, think, did you ever hear of a lady who has since died?

James. (Fervently.) Never, sir, never, God rest her soul!

Jack. That's right, and James, if you ever feel while I am here, your memory returning, just come to me and I'll drive everything out of your

mind. (Some one is heard coming.) Go, now, James, I hear Miss Langdon coming, and don't forget!

James. (Going.) I'll not forget, sir. I mean I'll not remember, sir. (Exit James at left; enter Constance at right.)

Constance. Oh, Mr. Schuyler, how do you do? But where's Polly?

Jack. How do you do, Miss Langdon? (He takes her hand, holds it a moment then drops it.) Well, you see Polly was taken ill at the last moment and couldn't come.

Constance. Oh, I'm so sorry, I did hope Polly would come.

Jack. Well, yes, I hoped so too, but I thought I'd come—

Constance. (Smiling.) Yes, I see that you've come.

Jack. I hope, Miss Langdon, that you do not object to my having come without her?

Constance. Oh, no, I think aunt Jane will be very glad to see you.

Jack. And aren't you at all glad to see me?

Constance. (Bustling about and going to tea-table.) Oh, now, I know you're tired from your journey and I'm going to make you a cup of tea.

Jack. How kind; but you didn't say whether you were glad to see me?

Constance. Oh, of course, I've thought of you so often since we met—in June.

Jack. That makes me very happy—

Constance. Yes, every time I look at my—pug I think of you.

Jack. (Stiffly.) Well, Miss Langdon, I fail to see—

Constance. (Smiling.) Oh, you know, you said you'd show me how to make him retrieve, fetch and carry—you know.

Jack. Yes, but you seem to forget what a slave I was to you all those three weeks (she sits down at tea-table, he is standing near) and I've lived on the thought of it ever since.

Constance. Sit down now, I'm going to pour your tea. (She rattles the cups, he stands watching her.) Why don't you sit down?

Jack. Oh, yes, I forgot all about—sitting down. (He sits.) Oh, how good it is to see you again, I've thought of nothing but—

Constance. (Smiling.) Cream and sugar?

Jack. Yes, if you please; but I was saying, when we were together at Newburgh—

Constance. Oh yes, that's where we met, isn't it?

Jack. Yes, that's where we met, and do you remember that night we were out in the boat and the moon was shining down on you and I said—

Constance. (Interrupting; tongs in hand.) Two lumps?

Jack. No, I didn't; oh yes, two if you please, but the boat you know, I said—

Constance. You said you'd show me about the pug.

Jack. Oh no, I said something else—

Constance. Lemon?

Jack. Oh yes, yes, but I said—

Constance. Yes, but what did I say?

Jack. (Fervently.) Yes, what did you say?

Constance. (Handing him cup.) I said it was time we were going in! (She laughs.)

Jack. (Rising, cup in hand and going to her.) Yes, and then what did I say?

Constance. Oh how can I remember all the things you said, I know I thought at the time—

Jack. Yes, you thought what?

Constance. That you were quite a talker.

Jack. Constance! How can you torture me so?

Constance. Be careful, you'll spill your tea.

Jack. Confound the tea! I beg your pardon, but really—(He gulps it down.) Oh its hot! (He dances about.) (She laughs.)

Constance. Now you see! I knew it was hot.

Jack. Well, I should say it was hot! (Aside.) How can a fellow make love with a burned tongue? (To her.) We were saying, Miss Langdon—

Constance. Let me fill your cup.

Jack. (Putting it down.) Not a drop more. (He stands near her; she seems nervous.) I will say what is in my mind; since we met in June, Miss Langdon, I've had no end of trouble, and the only thing that has kept me alive has been the thought of you—

Constance. Trouble, what kind of trouble?

Jack. Oh all kinds of trouble; but now thank heaven, its all over and I am here with you. (He bends over her.) Constance, what did I say to you in the boat? That I loved you, darling, I loved you then, and I adore you now—(Tries to put his arm about her.)

Constance. Oh, Mr. Schuyler, what will aunt Jane say?

Jack. Oh dam—I beg your pardon, but the question is this dear, will you say, do you think,—oh what am I trying to say, will you take me on trial, on probation, while I am here, and test my love for you; you've made a man of me already, I've painted hard all summer, and have sold a picture; with you, Constance, (he rises) to work for, I can win fame! (bends over her.) Is it yes?

Constance. I don't know what to say, what shall I say?

Jack. I'll tell you what to say; say "yes, Jack." (Voices heard.)

Constance. (Looking up at him.) Yes Jack. (He kisses her several times; the door at left opens and aunt Jane appears, followed by James with some logs of wood.)

Aunt J. Oh, some one has come; Constance, dear!

Constance. (Rising.) Yes, aunt Jane; this is Mr. Schuyler; you remember my saying that Polly had a brother who was coming with her; Mr. Schuyler, this is—(aunt J. goes up to Jack takes one look at him in the face, then faints in his arms, exclaiming:) It is! (James drops the wood with a loud bang and general consternation.)

Constance. Oh, dear, what is it? James, run for some water, put her on the lounge, Mr. Schuyler. (He does so.)

Jack. I never saw the lady before, I never have, upon my word.

Constance. (Fanning Miss P.) I see it all now —(James comes back.)

Jack. I'm innocent, I swear it! (Aside.) I wonder if she was at Lake George too!

Constance. You see, Mr. Schuyler, auntie, once long ago was engaged to a Mr. Schuyler, but the affair was broken off in some way and he went to New York and married some one else, so naturally when she heard you were coming she wondered whether you were any relation to her old lover, possibly you may bear a resemblance to him;

there, are you better, auntie dear? (Aunt J. opens her eyes and looks about.)

Aunt J. Yes, dear.

James. (Aside to Jack.) Is there anything I can do for you, sir?

Jack. Yes, you can get out!

James. (Going.) Yes, sir, I will. (He stops at door.)

Aunt J. (Sitting up.) Come here, my dear boy. (He goes to her and sits beside her.)

Jack. Very glad to meet you, Miss Pearce.

Constance. Why auntie, dear, you quite frightened us.

Aunt J. Yes, I was overcome by the sight of such a resemblance; James!

James. Yes, ma'am.

Aunt J. Go up in my room James, and bring that blue velvet box off my table.

James. Yes ma'am. (He goes.)

Aunt J. (To Jack.) Mr. Schuyler, what is your father's name?

Jack. My father's name is Henry Schuyler.

Aunt J. The very same. My Harry!

Constance. Dear auntie!

Aunt J. Oh, child, child, you know nothing of love in these days.

Jack. Oh, now I say, Miss Pearce.

Aunt J. Truth and constancy are not the fashion now. (James comes back, Jack takes Constance's hand back of the lounge and kisses it.)

Jack. We will prove that they are!

Aunt J. (Taking box from James.) Now you may go, James, give Tabby her milk and put a fresh ribbon on her.

James. Yes ma'am. (He goes.)

Aunt J. Years ago, Mr. Schuyler, (she opens the box and takes out some faded flowers and a tintype) there, see how much that looks like you! (Jack tries to get his head close to Constance' while they look at it.)

Constance. It does look like Ja—Mr. Schuyler.

Jack. Yes, it does.

Aunt J. (Taking no notice of them.) I loved your father, Mr. Schuyler, and he loved me, and then one day we had a lover's quarrel; oh if either of you young people ever fall in love, beware of those foolish little fallings out.

Jack. (Fervently.) Indeed we will!

Aunt J. And he went away,—he never came back; I should have been very lonely if this child had not been left to my care, but—

Constance. You never loved again, did you auntie dear?

Aunt J. Loved again? Why of course not, how could I? There never was but one man for me,

and that was (rising) Henry Schuyler! Oh well, what's the use of going back so far? How is your father, Mr. Schuyler, and—your mother?

Jack. My mother died four years ago, but my father is very well, and a dear old chap. (When he says his mother is dead Miss Pearce goes to a mirror which hangs on the right, and smooths her hair.)

Aunt J. And your father is alone in the world; poor Harry! Well, I'll leave you now, I have something to attend to, and Constance, if Mr. Schuyler wants something to do, you can go and watch the men in the field.

Constance. Oh we'll find plenty to do, auntie dear.

Jack. Oh yes, there's just lots and lots to do.

Aunt J. (At the door.) Welcome to my house, Mr. Schuyler. (She makes him a courtesy and he goes and kisses her hand.) Now, Connie, dear, if you go out in the night air you must have a shawl, (she turns to go and then turns back again) and oh, Constance, I forgot to tell you that I had a letter from your aunt Charlotte this morning asking if she could come up for a week or two, so I wrote at once to say come.

Constance. Oh I am so glad, aunt Charlotte is so jolly.

Jack. Who is aunt Charlotte?

Aunt J. Oh yes, and in the postscript, Connie,

she said she was engaged to a Mr.—somebody, you know I can't read her writing, but perhaps you can. (She takes a letter out of her pocket, puts it on table and goes out.)

Constance. (Taking up letter.) I'm so glad she's coming; aunt Charlotte is the widow of my mother's brother, and a very charming woman. (Reads the letter aloud.) "Dear Jane: Don't you want to take pity on me and ask me up for a few days? I am simply pining for a sight of you and dear Connie—"

Jack. Oh yes, I can quite understand that, you know.

Constance. Don't interrupt me. (goes on reading.) "I came over here (she writes from Atlantic City) and find it very dull; will come up on Tuesday." (Why that is to-day.) "Affectionately, Charlotte. P. S. Tell Connie that I am engaged to Mr." what is it? See if you can make it out?

Jack. (Looking over her shoulder.) It looks something like—Smith.

Constance. Yes, it does, but aunt Charlotte wouldn't marry a man named Smith, now I'm sure she wouldn't. Sh—Shuler, that's it.

Jack. (Puts his arm about her.) Yes, it does look something like Shuler, doesn't it?

Constance. Its just like her to put the most important thing in the postscript, its—

Jack. Its just like every woman to do that, but I believe—

Constance. Yes, its Shuler, now we'll put it away.

Jack. (Not moving.) Oh, I'm not half through with it yet, why its—

Constance. I know you'll like aunt Charlotte. (She looks up at him.)

Jack. My dear girl, so do I, in fact I feel quite fond of her already, but—

Constance. But what? (Face upturned.)

Jack. (Kissing her.) Yes, just that.

Constance. (Walking away.) Oh what shall I do with you? Ah! (She stops as if thinking.)

Jack. That is just what I am wondering.

Constance. I have the loveliest idea. (She goes to table gets paper and pen, sits down and takes the pen and appears to be in a reverie; Jack follows her about.) Dear aunt Jane! Now I'm going to—(goes into a reverie.)

Jack. Going to what?

Constance. Oh such a lovely idea, I am going to write a letter to—(Begins to write.)

Jack. To whom?

Constance. To your father. (Writing.)

Jack. My father! (Aside) The devil! (To her.) May I ask—

Constance. No, you may not ask, you may keep perfectly still and give me his address.

Jack. How can I give it to you if I am to keep perfectly still? Oh come now—

Constance. (Writing rapidly.) What shall I say next? Oh yes, now its nearly done.

Jack. Would you mind putting a message in a postscript?

Constance. From you? Oh no, I suppose not, but do hurry, (writing) P. S., now what is it?

Jack. You write it just as I say it.

Constance. Oh of course, go on.

Jack. Write "may I have, have" you got that down?

Constance. Yes, Yes, go on.

Jack. Well, there's only one more word, "Jack."

Constance. (Writing.) Jack? Why that doesn't make sense.

Jack. Read it.

Constance. (Reading.) "P. S. May I have Jack?" Oh, (Rising.) Mr. Schuyler, how could you spoil my letter? And it is so important, and now I'll have to write it all over again.

Jack. (Going to her.) Never mind, dear, give it to me, I'll scratch that out and address it, but by the way. (he sits down at table.) What's it about?

Constance. Why you see, I've written and asked your father to come here for a week,—you can guess why?

Jack. Well, upon my word I can't, unless, (smiling) you want to ask him in person.

Constance. Ask him? For what?

Jack. For my hand.

Constance. Well, when I ask for your hand you'll know it. No, I asked him so—oh dear I think its the loveliest idea,—I asked him so that dear auntie could see her old lover once more! And now I'll ring for Lotty (he starts) and have it posted at once.

Jack. Who is Lotty?

Constance. My maid; have you written it?

Jack. (Rises and gives her the letter and holds her hand.) Oh, Constance, dearest, if I was only sure of you, sure that nothing would ever part us; if I only had the right—(Door at left opens and Lotty the model comes in; they start apart, and she starts when she sees Jack.)

Lotty. Why there's Ja—Mr. Schuyler!

Jack. My God! Lotty!

Constance. (With her back to him.) Lotty, I want you to post this at once.

Lotty. Yes ma'am; how do you do, Mr. Schuyler?

Jack. Oh, how do you do?

Constance. What, do you know Mr. Schuyler? (Turning to him.) Do you know my maid?

Jack. Well, you see, the truth is—(Aside to Lotty.) Say something and say it quick, only not a word about, you know what.

Lotty. Well, you see, ma'am, I was once in Mr. Schuyler's studio in New York.

Jack. Yes, you see, she just happened to wander in there one day.

Constance. Well, you never told me that you knew Mr. Schuyler, Lotty.

Lotty. No ma'am, you see I didn't think it was worth mentioning. (Aside.) Is it off?

Jack. (Aside.) Well, I should say it was!

Constance. Well, Lotty, please post that at once.

Lotty. (Going; to Jack.) How is Mrs.—

Jack. (Quickly.) She's dead, yes, thank you, she's dead. (He makes signs at her not to say any more; Constance does not see him.)

Lotty. Oh poor lady! (Exit Lotty.)

Constance. What did she mean by Mrs.—

Jack. (Smiling nervously.) Oh, she meant—my mother.

Constance. (Severely.) I don't see how you can laugh when you speak of your poor dead mother.

Jack. I don't see how I can either, but my dear girl I assure you, I feel much more like crying.

Constance. I hope you do. Oh dear, I have just thought of Jacky!

Jack. Thought of whom?

Constance. Jacky, my pug. (Laughs.) Oh, I never thought, that's your name, isn't it? But I named him before I ever heard of you, indeed I did.

Jack. (Stiffly.) Well, I would be much indebted to you if you changed his name.

Constance. (Going toward door at back.) I will; but the poor little fellow has been shut up all this time, poor little Ja—(With a glance at Jack.) Toodles!

Jack. Don't stay long, life is so dreary without you—Oh Constance!

Constance. I'll be back in a minute. (She throws him a kiss and goes; he stands throwing kisses at the door she went out of when Lotty comes in at left and sees him.)

Lotty. Oh ho, well that is the latest, is it? You were very well supplied with sweethearts the last time I saw you.

Jack. Oh Lotty, don't remind me of that unhappy time.

Lotty. You needn't imagine, Mr. Schuyler, that I wish to think of it myself, you see I've made other arrangements since then.

Jack. (Putting his hand in his pocket.) I am very glad to hear it Lotty, I am indeed, and here's a nice present for you; but would you object to telling me how you got here?

Lotty. Well, you see, sir, I was sitting for a gentleman in Boston, when the dull season came on, and I answered an advertisement for a lady's maid.

Jack. Oh yes, I see, and you are with the sweetest—oh Lotty, (he goes close to her) I am the happiest man!

Lotty. Oh you are, well what became of the—other one?

Jack. (Speaking right in her ear.) I don't know!

Lotty. La! Don't know!

Jack. (Very happy air.) And I don't want to know? (Aunt J. opens door at right and sees them.)

Aunt J. Oh, is that you, Lotty? (Looks astonished.) And Mr. Schuyler!

Jack. (Leaving Lotty.) The maid had—something in her eye.

Aunt J. (Coming down.) Lotty, did you thank the gentleman for taking something out of your eye?

Lotty. No, ma'am. (Bows to Jack.) Thank you sir! (He bows.)

Jack. Oh, that's all right. (Aside.) Not a word, remember!

Lotty. (Going.) Don't flatter yourself! (Exit Lotty.)

Aunt J. Where is Connie, my niece?

Jack. She went out to get the dog.

Aunt J. Oh yes, Jacky.

Jack. Excuse me, his name was Jacky, but now its Toodles!

Aunt J. Tell me, Mr. Schuyler, has your father grown stout, or is he as slight as he was, and as handsome?

Jack. Well, he's rather inclined to—

Aunt J. (Quickly.) Not to drink?

Jack. (Smiling.) Oh no, to stoutness, I was going to say.

James. (Entering at back.) Shall I go down to the station to meet the guest ma'am?

Aunt J. No, it is not necessary, but you must be here to take the trunk or bag when my sister-in-law comes.

James. (Going, but stopping by Jack.) Yes ma'am. Oh sir, you didn't tell me what the poor lady died of?

Jack. Eh, what are you talking about; you're evidently remembering something that never occurred. (Puts his hand in his pocket; aside.) Get out!

Aunt J. Why James, what do you mean?

James. Oh yes, I forgot that I had forgotten. (Takes money and goes toward door.)

Jack. (Aside to James.) Confound you, I thought I told you to hold your tongue. Now lose your memory again!

James. (Going.) Yes sir; I can never remember again sir. (Exit James.)

Aunt J. Why, what did James mean?

Jack. Well I'm sure I don't know. But several times since I've been here, he's taken me for a man he once met up at Lake George, but of course he never met any man up there, I mean he never met me up there. And do you know what I think, Miss Pearce, I sometimes think that James is a little—(touches his head) you know!

Aunt J. Oh my gracious! You don't say, well perhaps I'd better send him off at once.

Jack. Well, of course I don't mean that I think he's at all violent, and if you tried to send him away he might become so; but if I were you I wouldn't pay much attention to anything he says.

Aunt J. Why of course, I won't if that's the case. Poor James! He does his work pretty well. Insanity is an awful thing, Mr. Schuyler.

Jack. Yes it is indeed. (Aside.) I ought to know, I'm on the verge of it!

Constance. (Entering.) Oh here you are. Was I gone long? (Sees Aunt J.) Oh!

Aunt J. Now, Connie, how often have I got to

tell you to wear a wrap when you go out in the night air?

Constance. Only once more, auntie dear; I am so anxious to see aunt Charlotte, I can hardly wait for her to come.

James. (Entering at right.) The depot carriage is coming up the road, ma'am.

Aunt J. Then she's coming; call Lotty, James.

James. Yes ma'am. (Exit James.)

Constance. Oh that must be she; I'm just dying to see her.

Jack. So am I, just dying. (Noise of wheels is heard; James and Lotty enter.)

Constance. Now that aunt Charlotte is coming we'll have some fun; she always stirs things up! (The door at back opens and Mrs. Leslie comes in, bag in hand; They all crowd about her, but Jack, and Lotty and James.)

Mrs. L. (When she enters.) Well, here I am, How do you all do?

Aunt J. Why Charlotte!

Constance. So glad you've come. (They kiss.)

Jack. My God! The widow! (He falls into a chair.)

Lotty. Why there she is now!

James. (Going to Jack.) I thought she was dead, sir, is it her ghost?

Jack. (Groaning.) I wish it was!

Mrs. L. Why there's Jack! How do you do,

Jack, I'd have come before if I'd known you were here.

Constance. Why aunt Charlotte, do you know Jack?

Mrs. L. Do I know Jack? Well, I should say I did; I'm engaged to Jack, eh Jack?

Constance. Engaged to him? Oh, he's deceived me! (She faints and James catches her.)

Aunt J. Then Schuyler was the name in the letter!

Jack. (Wildly.) No, no, the lady is engaged to —my father!

Aunt J. To Harry! (She faints and Jack catches her.)

Jack. See what you've done! Oh, you've stirred things up!

Mrs. L. Why what's the matter? What's the matter? You're always glad to see me, dear Jack! (She laughs.) Oh there is Lotty too, is she engaged to you now; We're all here, aren't we?

Lotty. Indeed I'd have you know—

James. (Turning to Lotty.) So you were engaged to him, too—Well, you can go back to him!

Lotty. Oh James, James! (She faints too.)

Jack. I must go, this is nice, isn't it? (He starts but Mrs. L. catches him and puts her arm in his.)

Mrs. L. Don't leave me, dear Jack!

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

The scene is laid in the same room as Act second. When the curtain goes up Lotty is discovered.

Lotty. I just wish I'd never seen this house, that's what I wish; I've had nothing but trouble since I came into it; and if Mr. Schuyler thinks I am going to tell any more lies for him he's mistaken, and as for James, well, I don't blame him very much; suppose some one had come along and said he was engaged, I guess I wouldn't like it. (James appears at left with a poker.) Good morning, Mr. Grant.

James. (Stiffly; coming down.) Good morning, Miss Lamb. (He goes and stirs the fire, Lotty pretends to be very busy at the opposite side of the room; she turns to look at him just as he turns to look at her; both start and look the other way.)

Lotty. If you're waiting for me to make an explanation, Mr. James Grant, you'll wait a long time.

James. (Rising.) I'm waiting for nothing, Miss Lamb; you are a perfidious woman, (Tragically.) Avaunt!

Lotty. (Beginning to cry.) I'm not—either, and you're a mean—hateful thing, so there! But if you think I was—ever engaged to that Mr. Schuyler, you're very much mistaken—I just hate him.

James. I have nothing to do with your private affairs, Miss Lamb; the lady said, however, that you were engaged to him, and she ought to know—

Lotty. No, it was she, herself—oh, James, James— (She cries.)

James. You need not think that you can soften my heart of stone with your tears; I heard what I heard, and I know what I know, and I say, as I said at first, avaunt!

Lotty. Well, you can go—and ask him—yourself. I think—you're real mean.

James. (At door.) Good by, for—ever! (Exit James.) (door at right opens and Aunt Jane, followed by Constance, comes in.)

Aunt Jane. Why, Lotty, crying; what's the matter?

Lotty. (Rises and goes to door.) No, ma'am, I'm—sneezing. (Exit Lotty.)

Aunt J. My dear child, I wish you would tell me what the matter is?

Constance. Oh, auntie, dear, I feel very badly, very badly; if you had the weight on your soul that I have on mine, you would not wonder at my depression.

Aunt J. But I have, my dear, I have; I was so happy yesterday to meet Henry's son, and hear about him, and then last night to hear that he was engaged, and to your Aunt Charlotte.

Constance. (Surprised.) Why, what do you mean, Auntie? Aunt Charlotte is engaged to Ja— young Mr. Schuyler.

Aunt J. Eh, What? Why, didn't you hear him say it was his father?

Constance. No, I didn't; so he said it was his father, well, (Smiling.) then Jack is free!

Aunt J. So you and Mr. Schuyler are in love, well, my dear child, I hope things will go smoother for you than they did for me; but oh, I was so surprised, to think that Harry is engaged again!

Constance. Poor auntie! (Kissing her.) But didn't you think that everybody acted rather queerly when Aunt Charlotte arrived?

Aunt J. Yes, but it was all so mixed up, and we were so surprised that she knew Mr. Schuyler, and he started shooting this morning before I could ask him anything.

Constance. I hope he won't shoot himself.

Aunt J. Oh, Connie, dear, I trust this young man is good enough for you.

Constance. (Absent-mindedly.) I hope so, I'm sure.

Aunt J. There is one thing that worries me; when your Aunt Charlotte came in she seemed to

know Lotty, and said something in a laughing manner about her being engaged to Mr. Schuyler —to Jack.

Constance. (Frowning.) Did she? Oh, dear, dear, I'm afraid he's deceiving me; yes, it all comes back now, he seemed to know Lotty when she came in, and said she had once been in his studio. I'm afraid he's a monster!

Aunt J. Yes, I'm afraid he's a monster! (Door at left opens and aunt C. comes in.) Good morning, Charlotte.

Mrs. L. Good morning, Jane, and Connie.

Constance. (Stiffly to Mrs. L.) Good morning. (To aunt J.) Well, auntie, I'll go up stairs and finish my letters and if Mr. Schuyler comes in and asks for me, just tell him I have a headache (at the door) and can't go rowing with him as I promised. (Exit Constance.)

Aunt J. Very well, dear; poor child, poor child!

Mrs. L. What's the matter with her? (Takes some embroidery out of her pocket and sits down.)

Aunt J. Well, Charlotte, I'm afraid she's in love.

Mrs. L. You may well say, "poor child," if she's in love. (Sighing.) Its a dreadful disease! (Smiling.)

Aunt J. (Sighing.) I never regarded it as a disease, Charlotte.

Mrs. L. I have, always, a very dangerous disease, with bad symptoms, and very contagious,

but not necessarily fatal, at least it never was with me. (Smiles pleasantly.)

Aunt J. Well, you see, Charlotte, I once had the disease, and it was fatal with me. I've never gotten over it. But I don't suppose (sighing) that you ever loved as I did.

Mrs. L. Oh, (smiling) bless your heart, yes, several times!

Aunt J. (Serious.) Oh then it was not the real thing, for the fatal case is usually a first love.

Mrs. L. First love, let me see if I can remember my first love! (Puts down her work, and counts on her fingers, lips moving, aunt J. watches her.) Oh yes, I remember now, (sighing) yes, I remember now.

Aunt J. (Full of sympathy.) Oh, Charlotte, did he die?

Mrs. L. (Smiling.) Die? Oh no, I married him!

Aunt J. Happy woman! But I suppose it touches a very sore spot for me to speak of him?

Mrs. L. (Smiling.) Oh no indeed, not at all.

Aunt J. I know how you mourned him! (She sighs.)

Mrs. L. Yes, I wore black for two years, and to tell the truth it was very becoming; and I wore lavender and grey for three more, you see lavender was always my color.

Aunt J. You must have been very lonely, Charlotte.

Mrs. L. Yes, I was at first, because I could not have much company, but since I've gotten on very well. (Sighing.) But love is a strange thing.

Aunt J. Yes, it is, but a holy thing, a beautiful thing. When I was a girl, Charlotte, I loved too, and I love him yet!

Mrs. L. (Astonished; putting down her work.) Not the same man?

Aunt J. The same man, why, of course; for thirty years!

Mrs. L. Well, Jane, I'd like to see that man. You don't happen to have a picture of him about anywhere, have you?

Aunt J. You have seen him, and you—er—you know him very well, his name is Henry Schuyler! (Aunt J. goes to her.) Do you think, Charlotte, that you are good enough for him?

Mrs. L. No, Jane, if you've loved him for thirty years, I don't think I am; but you—

Aunt J. (Sighing.) Yes, you were speaking about Mr. Leslie, you were very brave to rise above it, Charlotte.

Mrs. L. Above it? What was that?

Aunt J. Why the death of your husband you know.

Mrs. L. (Smiling.) Oh yes, of course; but Mr. Leslie was a good man and he was ready to go, he longed for rest! And I never worry when good

people die, and Mr. Leslie was so good! Constance is so like her uncle.

Aunt J. Poor child, I did hope that things would go smoothly for her.

Mrs. L. Who is the young man upon whom she has set her affections?

Aunt J. Well, you see, I'm afraid its Mr. Schuyler.

Mrs. L. (starts and drops her work) Jack! What makes you think so?

Aunt J. Well, there are signs, you know, and ever since she came back from visiting his sister, up on the Hudson, I've noticed a change in her, and when you came in last night, and said, by mistake of course, I suppose you got the names mixed, that you were engaged to him, don't you remember that she fainted away before she heard that it was—er Henry Schuyler that you were to marry and not the son?

Mrs. L. Oh she didn't hear that? (aside) I didn't hear that myself!

Aunt J. Oh, if I could only bring them together and make it all right.

Mrs. L. (Rising and thinking a moment.) Don't you worry yourself, Jane, I'll bring them together, that is—if he wants her, are you sure he wants her?

Aunt J. Yes, I'm pretty nearly sure, Charlotte,

and you know I've had some experience in these matters, and so have you.

Mrs. L. Yes, I have, a good deal, in these matters (going to her) now, Jane, don't give it another thought, if Constance wants Jack she shall have him. (Aside.) There are so many Jacks in the world! (She laughs.)

Aunt J. What did you say, Charlotte?

Mrs. L. I said you were a dear old love, and not to worry yourself another minute; Constance shall have Jack!

Aunt J. You are so good, Charlotte; but of course you wouldn't want to have Jack about when you're married to—Henry.

Mrs. L. Eh? Who's Henry?

Aunt J. Why, the gentleman you're going to marry.

Mrs. L. Oh yes, of course, (smiling) no, I wouldn't want Jack about when I'm married to —Henry!

Aunt J. You have a good heart, Charlotte.

Mrs. L. (Kissing her.) Now, Jane, don't bother your head about anything, I'll go and find Constance, and make everything all right. (She goes to door at back.) Have confidence in me!

Aunt J. I have, Charlotte, I have, great confidence. I believe you are sincere!

Mrs. L. (Looks surprised.) I wish you'd give me your picture! (She laughs; standing at the

door.) I wish I was as sincere as you are, Jane, I wish I'd loved somebody for thirty years; but times have changed, and we do those things better now; we sometimes love thirty times for—one year each, but you see the old way was best, truth and constancy, Jane, you exemplify them, while I —well I represent the spirit of the end of the century! (Going.) Don't worry, Constance shall have Jack! (She goes laughing.)

Aunt J. Such a good heart as she has; but I wonder what she wanted my picture for; I haven't had any taken since that daguerrotype I had done for Harry; oh well, this is a queer world. (Mr. Schuyler comes in at back, she turns and sees him.) Harry!

Mr. S. (They shake hands.) Jane!

Aunt J. (Very much flustered.) So glad to see you again, how long is it since we've met,— Mr. Schuyler?

Mr. S. Call me Harry; its like old times, Jane; its nearly thirty years since I left here, and in that time I've had a good deal of sorrow and a good deal of joy; but Jane, how have you been?

Aunt J. (Smiling.) I'm just as you left me, Harry.

Mr. S. Well, well, I'm glad to be here.

Aunt J. I suppose you came up to see the lady —you're engaged to?

Mr. S. Engaged! I assure you Jane, I'm not engaged. My wife died four years ago.

Aunt J. Yes, but your son said you were engaged to—Mrs. Leslie.

Mr. S. Eh what? My son said—well upon my word my son takes great liberties with me. (Aside.) I see, the widow turned up, and not knowing what to do he's put her off on me! (To her.) No, Jane, its a mistake, I'm not engaged to any one; I came here to see the—old place once more!

Aunt J. I'm glad to welcome you to my home again. (Goes to door.) Come with me into the garden, let me show you the improvements I have made.

Mr. S. (Following her.) Yes, yes, its just like home to be here, Jane.

Aunt J. (At the door.) I'm glad to hear you say that, Harry.

Mr. S. (As they go together.) And you, Jane, you have changed very little. (Exit both; door at right opens, and Jack puts his head in and looks about, then enters, stands his gun in the corner and puts his hat on the table.)

Jack. Its no use; its all up with me; I can't shoot, can't eat, can't sleep, can't live, can't die. Don't know what to do; after thinking I was among strangers, to find they all know me, know more about me than I know about myself. Oh its

awful! What shall I do? Even if I told Constance the truth about that Lake George affair, (James is seen coming in at the door at back) she'd always think I was in love with her–damned aunt! (James coughs; Jack turns and sees him.) Well, what do you want?

James. I just thought I'd ask you, sir—

Jack. Well, you can't ask me, do you see? Get out, and leave me to my misery; get out!

James. Yes sir, but its about Lotty, sir, she's been crying all day and I just wanted to ask if she really was engaged to you; you see she's a good girl, and I haven't spoken to her since—because—

Jack. (Angrily.) No, she never was engaged to me, its a damned lie; take her, run away with her, and the quicker you go the better it will suit me!

James. Oh thank you, sir, (going) the—er lady —didn't die, did she, sir?

Jack. (Angrily.) Get out!

James. (At door.) Yes sir. (Exit James.)

Jack. (Walking about.) I'll go too, that will be the best thing for me to do, I'll get out! (Stops.) Oh, I don't know what to do! (Sits down and covers his face with his hands; Constance appears at back and looks at him; he doesn't see her.) I'm the unluckiest, most abject wretch on the face of the earth; how can I get these people out of the house? (Rises, Constance

disappears.) I have an idea! (He smiles.) Splendid, I'll do it! I'll send a telegram to Dick in New York. (Takes a paper out of his pocket, and a pencil; writes:) "To Mr. Richard Sherwood, New York, the widow is here, telegraph her that she is wanted in New York on business, and save me; get her away, I don't care how. Jack." (Dick opens door at back; Jack doesn't see him.) Now that's an idea; with the widow out of the house I can soon regain my position. (Turns and sees Dick.)

Dick. How are you, old man?

Jack. (Groaning.) Oh damn, damn, damn! Why couldn't you have stayed where you belonged?

Dick. (Coming down.) Well, upon my word, that's a nice welcome. I supposed you'd be glad to see me. Here I am among strangers, and you the only one I knew to treat me like this—you know how it is yourself, you came here a stranger.

Jack. Yes, I supposed I did, but I tell you man, everybody I ever heard of, or spoke to, or knew is here in this house. I'm not at all surprised to see you.

Dick. Well, I understood your father was here, and it was him that I wanted to see particularly.

Jack. Is my father here too?

Dick. I believe he came up on the last train before me.

Jack. Is that so? Oh, I'm not surprised, he was the only person I knew who was not here; oh I suppose he's here, everybody's here; the widow and Lotty are here, (Dick laughs) I expect to see the ghosts of my ancestors to-night.

Dick. Why what in the world's the matter with you, old man, you seem upset.

Jack. (Laughing wildly.) Upset? Oh, no, I'm not upset, why what should upset me?

Dick. I came to tell you a piece of news; I'm engaged! (Jack sits down and groans.) Well, that's a fine why to do; haven't you anything to say, aren't you going to congratulate me?

Jack. I beg your pardon, old man, but I'm in the most awful box, and I thought perhaps you'd take the widow off my hands, but if you're engaged, I suppose you wont.

Dick. Sorry, old chap, but it's quite out of the question; as long as you haven't asked me to whom I'm engaged, I'll tell you. To your sister.

Jack. To Polly? Well!

Dick. Yes, to Polly, bless her heart!

Jack. Here's my blessing, (They shake hands.) but you really must excuse me if I seem to act peculiarly, but I believe I hate the sound of the word engagement.

Dick. Oh, you needn't apologize, I know you've been engaged a good deal; but I want the consent of your father. (Mrs. L. opens door at back and comes in, smiling.) Ah, there is—Mrs. Leslie.

Jack. (Groans.) Oh, is she coming?

Mrs. L. (Coming down.) Well, here we are again; how do you do, Mr. Sherwood?

Dick. How do you do? Do you know whether Mr. Schuyler is here?

Mrs. L. Yes, he's in the garden with Miss Pearce, you go and find him while I talk to—Jack.

Jack. Oh, no, I must go, must see a—man.

Mrs. L. (Taking him by the arm.) Well, you must see a woman first.

Jack. Oh, ladies first, of course. Dick!

Dick. I'll leave you now. (At the door; Jack makes imploring gestures to him; he shakes his head, smiling.) Perhaps I may see you before I go back. (Exit Dick.)

Mrs. L. I just wanted to see you on a matter of business; you see, Jack, I've been trying to find you for five years to say—

Jack. Yes, say it, out with it; put me out of my agony; I'm prepared for anything.

Mrs. L. Well, the truth is, Jack, you do very well for the summer, for the warm months, but for a steady thing I've decided that for the vicissitudes, and changes and chances of this life, that I want something a little heavier, a little more substantial—

Jack. Will you please tell me what you are talking about it?

Mrs. L. Oh can't you guess? You're so obtuse, Jack.

Jack. I wish you'd get out what you're trying to say.

Mrs. L. Yes, but before I go on with what I want to say, I wish you'd tell me, Jack, what made you leave Lake George in such a mysterious manner, several years ago?

Jack. (Groaning.) Oh never mind that now, its over and done with, but I suppose I might just as well have stayed—

Mrs. L. (Smiling.) Yes, I suppose you might; but Jack if you had only come to me instead of running away, I would have made it all right; there never was anything mean about me, you know that. How jealous you were Jack, it was simply delightful! (She laughs.)

Jack. Oh yes, it was perfectly delightful! (Laughs wildly.)

Mrs. L. But I hope, Jack, that you never thought I took you seriously. I never for one moment regarded you except in the light of a good joke, indeed I did not; (laughing) you were a sort of summer opera to me, Jack! (Goes close to him.) You never have—er—worried about this, have you, Jack?

Jack. Oh no, I never worry about anything; I'm so used to trouble now that nothing matters. But you were saying—

Mrs. L. (Meditatively.) How you did love me! (Laughs.) But there is not the slightest

reason to worry, for things always come out right, you know.

Jack. It depends very much upon what you call right. Its too late for them to come out right for me; I'm in too deep a hole. (Walks about.) Oh if I only—

Mrs. L. Well if you'll only keep quiet and not get so excited, I will tell you how you can—oh well I might as well begin all over again—you see Jack, I've changed my mind.

Jack. (Desperately.) What are you driving at?

Mrs. L. Oh, don't you see? I'm trying to break it to you gently. Ever since I met you at Lake George, Jack, I've been trying to find you to break our engagement; do you see now, stupid.

Jack. (Smiling) I see. (Aside.) I'd have let her find me before now if I'd known that!

Mrs. L. Yes, Jack, you'll do for picnics and lakes, and that sort of thing, you know, but for life, oh no! Oh, there was something else I wanted to say.

Jack. Yes, go on. (Aside.) I wonder if she wants it on again!

Mrs. L. You see, Jack, I saw how it was with you and Constance, and fearing that I might have made some trouble for you, I went to Constance and told her all about Lake George, only I said that you didn't care a rap about me—

Jack. (Smiling.) You said that, did you?

Mrs. L. Yes, I said that; I can do those things

once in a while. (Smiling.) I said nothing about "Scaling mountain heights, swimming rivers," etc. (He laughs.) I said that you never loved but one, and that was—

Jack. Yes, but one, and that was—go on.

Mrs. L. And that was she! Oh, yes, I said that, and I did the square thing by you, Jack, I got you out of this horrid mess, and so, go in and win, and take the blessing of your—aunt—to be!

Jack. (Smiling.) Well, you are a good sort; now say, Mrs. Leslie, that was downright decent of you, it was, upon my word. But I hope you don't think I'm a bad sort of chap?

Mrs. L. Oh, not at all; you made one summer pass, you'll do very well; but make haste, Constance is waiting for you in the summer-house, don't waste time.

Jack. (going.) Waste time, not I! (Lotty comes in at right and he nearly falls over her as he rushes out.) Now confound it, what do you want?

Lotty. (Handkerchief to her eyes.) I want you to tell—James—that I never was engaged to—you, that's what I want.

Jack. I did tell him, now get out of my sight, I'm in a hurry. (Exit Jack.)

Lotty. (To Mrs. L.) Well, are you engaged to him now?

Mrs. L. (Smiling.) No, my child, I think you and I have gotten rid of him—forever.

Lotty. This is good news—for James; I'll go and find him. (Exit Lotty at left; enter aunt J. and Mr. S. at right.)

Aunt J. Oh Charlotte, here's Mr. Schuyler.

Mrs. L. Introduce me, Jane, introduce me.

Aunt J. Why this is strange, I thought you were—

Mrs. L. (Smiling.) Never mind that, introduce me just the same.

Aunt J. Harry, this is Charlotte, Mrs. Leslie.

Mr. S. How do you do, Mrs. Leslie, I think I have had the pleasure before.

Mrs. L. Yes, your face is familiar to me, (aside to him) father! (They both laugh.)

Aunt J. Shall I leave you alone together?

Mr. S. (Quickly.) Oh no, I pray you not!

Mrs. L. Oh no, on the contrary, call the others in, I have an announcement to make.

Aunt J. (Going to door.) I will call them.

Mrs. L. And where is Mr. Sherwood?

Mr. S. Oh he went back at once, he's engaged to my little girl, and of course he could not waste time.

Mrs. L. Oh of course not; you know how it is yourself, eh father? (She laughs. Jack and Constance come in at right, and Lotty and James at left.) Oh there you are!

Jack. Father, this is Constance.

Constance. (Going to him.) How do you do,

Mr. Schuyler, I am so glad to see you. (Aside.) Did you get my letter?

Mr. S. Yes, and (smiling) you may have—Jack!

Constance. Oh the bad boy, did he send that? Lotty, have you good news, your face shines.

Lotty. Yes, ma'am, if you please, James, you see, ma'am.

Aunt J. Well, that is very nice, but James, I hope you will be a good sober man and always be kind to Lotty.

Lotty. (James much embarassed.) Yes ma'am he will, ma'am. (Walks by Mr. S.) How do you do papa?

Mr. S. Eh, what? Oh yes, I see. Well, Jack, you ought to be a very happy man, sir.

Jack. I am sir, I am, thanks to—whom Constance?

Constance. (Going to her.) Thanks to aunt Charlotte!

Mrs. L. Don't mention it, my dears, and now for my news. I'm to be married too!

Mr. S. (Aside to aunt J.) We'll be left to ourselves yet, Jane.

Aunt J. Yes, Harry; but Charlotte, who is it?

Jack and Constance. Yes, who is he?

Mrs. L. You can never guess!

Jack. (To Constance.) Not to me. dear, I swear it!

Mr. S. Not to me, Jane!

Mrs. L. No indeed. To the Count von Hart of Vienna. (They crowd about her.) He wants me —very much; and I want—foreign travel—very much. (She laughs.)

Mr. S. And now for me, I also, am to be married! (Aunt J. nervous.)

Jack. You, father to whom?

Mr. S. (Bowing before aunt J.) To you, Jane, if you will have me. After all these years my heart has returned to its allegiance. What say you, Jane?

Aunt J. (Smiling.) You know my feelings, Harry! (He kisses her hand.)

Mrs. L. Now everything is lovely; but what's the moral of all this?

Aunt J. (Smiling.) That hearts never grow old!

Jack. That what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive—

Mr. S. (Smiling.) Widows, eh my boy?

Constance. That love is the best thing after all!

Lotty. That the darkest day is just before the dawn; eh, James?

James. That's so, that's so!

Mrs. L. And that widows are of some use in the world, if only to—

Jack. To stir things up!

CURTAIN.

C. M. B. July, 1895.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 017 199 456 1